



How can a climate change perspective be integrated into public health surveillance?

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Abstract:

OBJECTIVES: Climate change may be considered as a key factor for environmental change, exposure to health risks and pathogens, consequently impairing the state of health among populations. Efficient health surveillance systems are required to support adaptation to climate change. However, despite a growing awareness, the public health surveillance sector has had very little involvement in the drafting of adaptation plans. This paper proposes a method to raise awareness about climate change in the public health community, to identify possible health risks and to assess the needs for reinforced health surveillance systems. **METHODS:** A working group was set up comprising surveillance experts in the following fields: environmental health; chronic diseases and; infectious diseases. Their goal was to define common objectives, to propose a framework for risk analysis, and to apply it to relevant health risks in France. **RESULTS:** The framework created helped to organize available information on climate-sensitive health risks, making a distinction between three main determinants as follows: (1) environment; (2) individual and social behaviours; and (3) demography and health status. The process is illustrated using two examples: heatwaves and airborne allergens. **CONCLUSION:** Health surveillance systems can be used to trigger early warning systems, to create databases which improve scientific knowledge about the health impacts of climate change, to identify and prioritize needs for intervention and adaptation measures, and to evaluate these measures. Adaptation requires public health professionals to consider climate change as a concrete input parameter in their studies and to create partnerships with professionals from other disciplines.

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Resource Description

Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional, Policymaker, Researcher

Early Warning System: ☒

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resource focus on systems used to warn populations of high temperatures, extreme weather, or other elements of climate change to prevent harm to health

A focus of content

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Temperature, Unspecified Exposure

Air Pollution: Allergens

Temperature: Extreme Heat, Fluctuations

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Europe

European Region/Country: European Country

Other European Country : France

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified, Respiratory Effect

Respiratory Effect: Asthma, Other Respiratory Effect

Respiratory Condition (other) : respiratory allergic diseases

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

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Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article, Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content